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THE YOUTH IN THE REBELLION.

ADDRESS

BEFORE

GEO. H. WARD POST 10, G. A. R.

JUNE 3, 1883,

BY

ALFRED S. ROE.

THE YOUTH IN THE REBELLION.

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GEO. H. WARD POST 10, G. A. R.

IN

MECHANICS HALL, WORCESTER, MASS., JUNE 3, 1883,

BY

ALFRED S. ROE

CO. A, 9TH N. Y. HEAVY ARTILLERY, AND MEMBER OF POST 10.

Worcester:

PRESS OF CHARLES HAMILTON,
311 MAIN STREET.

1883.

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THE YOUTH IN THE REBELLION.

*Commander of Post 10, Comrades, Sons of Veterans,
Ladies of the Relief Corps, and Friends:—*

LESS than a twelvemonth since, there was enacted, in the city hall of Worcester, a scene that deserves a lasting place in our memories.¹ Grouped about the mayor were a score or more of men who had special interest in certain bits of worn and tattered bunting that were to be placed for safe keeping in a receptacle prepared for them through the thoughtfulness of the city's executive. To the casual observer these striped and bestarred banners were flags only, inspiring no thought of the history connected with each fold and thread. But Corporal Rice, who held the flag of the 15th, had seen it when rebel lines broke before it at Gettysburg; Lieut. Barnard, of the 57th, recalled the terrible days of the Wilderness, when two hundred and fifty of his comrades were killed, wounded or missing; men of the 51st lived over again the campaigns in the Carolinas: on the folds of the flag of the 34th could be read the long, weary marches, and the gallant fighting in Western Virginia; Sergeant Putnam, who bore the flag of the 25th, once more heard the rebel yell at Cold Harbor and Petersburg; while Sergeant Plunkett of the 21st saw the river and St. Mary's Height at Fredericksburg, saw again his three dead and six wounded comrades, all beneath those folds, and once more beheld his own blood staining that banner a deeper crimson, when, his two good arms falling, he became the armless hero we know so well.

¹ Saturday, December 9, 1882, Elijah B. Stoddard, Mayor.

Looking beyond the shot-torn banners, we see the heaving masses that once followed them. Rehabilitated as of old, they stand in line, proud of their places, glad to battle for God and the right. These flags were new then. From tender, delicate hands they passed to the keeping of determined soldiers.

Men do not die for pieces of bunting only. Daily our factories can turn out thousands of yards. Alternately striped with red and white, with stars clustering on the corner field of blue, that object symbolizes all that brave men cherish most. Home, wife, children, parents, country, all the words that linger longest and sweetest on the lips, are suggested in its gorgeous dyes. Under it, the floating ship becomes American territory. To its protection have fled the oppressed of all nations, and, through the results of the civil war, the last mockery of our long-vaunted liberty was swept away, and the quondam slave could look to it and live. Jealously guarded by valiant hearts, the battle-line was formed on it. To the left or right the eyes of the advancing soldiers were cast to see that they were moving steadily with their colors. If they kept pace with the flag, they did their duty, and the true soldier looked well to see that he did not leave the field before his standard. Its bearer cut down by hostile shot or shell, it has been eagerly seized, lest its folds should touch the ground, and again borne forward, and, though its guard knew that death was the lot of him who bore it, yet it wanted not a bearer. "There, come up to that!" said the color-sergeant of the Massachusetts Ninth at Fredericksburg, as he placed his colors far in advance of his wavering regiment, and, filled with enthusiasm at the deed of their gallant comrade, the men rallied and conquered. When all but honor was lost the flag has been concealed on the person of its keeper, and there hidden from foeman's eyes all through the horrors of Libby and Andersonville, till a return to liberty has permitted its unfurling. To prevent

its capture or soiling, its custodian has wrapped it about himself, and, though weak and wounded, crawled on hands and knees to friendly lines. Looking towards it as borne steadily forward, the eyes of the dying soldier have grown bright, and the dews of death could not quench his joy at its triumphant progress. In danger, all thoughts of self were lost, in the great agony lest the colors should be disgraced. Said the brave Mulligan at Winchester, as dying he was carried from the field, "Lay me down and save the flag." "Defend your colors; rally about them!" was long the cry in battle till the tuneful Root made the words the refrain in

"Rally round the flag, boys,
Rally once again,"

and to-day two of our New England States¹ boast that no flag of theirs was ever touched by rebel hands. As the Spartan mother gave into the hands of her son the shield, with the injunction to return with it or upon it, so the federal soldier felt that the flag intrusted to him was a charge to be defended with his life. Said Governor Andrew to Colonel Jones, of the immortal Sixth, "This flag, Sir, take and bear with you. It will be an emblem on which all eyes will rest, reminding you always of that which you are to hold most dear." In reply, the colonel said: "Your Excellency, you have given to me this flag, which is the emblem of all that stand before you. It represents my entire command, and, so help me God, I will never disgrace it." Through the tumult, strife and bloodshed of Baltimore that flag was carried unsullied, adding new glories to the 19th of April, on to make safe the nation's capital. And then returning, it was placed beneath the dome of our state house, at the left of the statue of our beloved Andrew, ever to memorialize one of the proudest pages in the history of our commonwealth. To-day the visitor at our capitol makes haste to see

¹ Maine and Vermont.

the shredded cloth, the shattered staffs which, in silent eloquence, tell of the valor and devotion of the sons of Massachusetts.

These sons came from every walk and pursuit in life. Count de Rochambeau, many years before, had said, "In America men of every trade are soldiers, but none are soldiers by trade." Responding to the call of the President they have assembled and sworn (seemingly an unnecessary act) allegiance to the government. In uniform, now see them as they are drawn up for their last parade before departure. The mayor, the governor, or some other distinguished citizen has taken the finely-wrought banner from the fair hands that fashioned it and, in eloquent words, has given it to the regiment. The colonel has responded in fitting language. The officers have taken their posts, the men face to the right and with banners flying and drums beating are off for the front. Perhaps, as they march away, they keep time to the stirring notes of "John Brown's body lies a-mouldering in the grave," and the heart beats fast to see them go. Note them as they pass. Here is one who fought with Taylor and Scott in Mexico. He may have walked in triumph the halls of the Montezumas. The next early strayed from home, and, fighting against savage Indians, learned the art of war. There is one, a canny Scotchman, who followed Sir Colin Campbell up the steep redoubt at Alma. Some have grown old in wars in this or other lands, the death shot, soon to fall, will make the "last of many scars," but in the light elastic step of most we see certain evidence of youth. The average age is twenty-five years, but many still are lads. In our passing regiment are more than three hundred soldiers who, in the eyes of the law, are boys. The hands that to-day grasp the musket so firmly, but yesterday held the text-book. From the plough and the machine shop, the office and the school, they have come to learn grand, stern lessons in war. There are boys on whose lips has not yet appeared

that which proclaims them men. A fond mother's kiss has, lately, left its impress on that boy's downy cheek; but in his bosom there beats a heart that is devoted to country, and for it he is willing to die. To the camp and the march he is to lend relief through his undaunted spirit. He knows that dear ones are looking with tearful eyes as he marches by; but he chokes down his own rising sobs, that he may not add further grief to those who love him. Company after company passes. The same story of middle age and youth is told o'er and o'er. There are the joyous shouts and hurrahs of those who go not unmingled with the tears and sobs of those to be bereft. There are the waving of handkerchiefs, the last fond glance, through tear-bedimmed eyes, and the regiment has passed. Faintly and still more faintly come the strains of martial music, long after the tramp of marching feet has ceased. A turn in the street has hidden the officers riding so proudly and the flags floating so grandly. And so they passed. In every city in our northern land the scene was constantly repeated. All leaned forward anxiously, nay joyously, to see the heroes forward marching; but to many came this sad thought, "These can not all return." Never again will all those gallant forms move forward together. The vicissitudes of war will thin those ranks. Again and again will the church be opened for the last sad rites over the dead returning. A new mound in the cemetery and a simple headstone will tell the brief story of him who dared to risk his all.

But it is with the boys who left home and friends for the harsh experience of a soldier's life that we have to do to-night, and our theme is

THE YOUTH IN THE REBELLION; WHAT HE DID AND WHAT
HE LEARNED.

It was loyalty that took him from the paternal roof and prompted him to don the patriotic blue. It is possible that

the thought that in future years he would not have to give reasons and excuses why he was not in the army may have had weight. Be that as it may, from his books and teachers, from home lessons, he had early learned of strifes long past. An old, rusty musket, a strangely-fashioned sword, or, perhaps, a bit of long-unused uniform, had proclaimed to his childish mind the patriotism of some ancestor in generations past. Doubtless these garments had been donned and the weapons shouldered in vain imitation of him whose history was linked with years agone. All this had sowed the seed ; but now had come a time for active, vigorous movement. Loyalty was no longer a thing of memory ; but it was for the youth himself to count his day a fortunate one, since it fell on times when he, too, might form a part of history and prove his love for native land.

How high sits hope on his manly brow, as he steps proudly off, and, in his zeal, he almost forgets, for the moment, the bleeding hearts behind him. He has not yet reached the age when he must think of those dependent upon him ; but he has a tender place in his breast for those who love and have cared for him. His is not the tender solicitude of the father who anxiously wonders how the mouths of his babes will be filled, and who devoutly breathes a prayer that the all-seeing Father will befriend them. With no such distracting care upon him, the boy soldier was the life of the camp ; he relieved the march of half its tedium, and when the battle's din arose, no voice amidst all the shout higher than his was heard. From whose tent was it that the song started whose refrain banished care and sorrow ? Whose indeed, but that of those boys who, in school, had resolved to enlist together, and now make the welkin ring with the notes of *Upidee*, or is it the still more rollicking "Finnegan's Wake ?" And, before they are done, the whole camp will resound with "When Johnny comes marching home again." One

day, we all remember it, the dust was thick ; the sun shone hot ; the march had begun long before daybreak ; we had halted the briefest time possible for breakfast. Noon was approaching, and still no pause. Foot-sore and weary the long line winds along, without system, without order, straggling even begins, when some careless boy, whom fatigue has not suppressed, strikes up, "Pop Goes the Weasel." The notes give renewed strength to the wearied limbs, and the delighted ear sends a glad message to all the members of the tired body. A quicker pace, a more orderly line, a better natured lot of men was the result of this brief, boyish freak ; and when, finally, the regiment bivouacked, and the older men, too weary for aught else, threw themselves upon the ground, these boys kindled fires, filled canteens, made the coffee, made life endurable. Active and alert when on the march, full of pranks and music when in camp, he was no laggard when his line advanced amid whistling bullet and hurtling shell. Robert Hendershot crosses the Rappahannock in spite of the opposition of his superiors, clinging to the stern of the boat, wet to the waist. His drum shot to pieces, he grasps a musket and secures a confederate prisoner. Returning, General Burnside says, "Boy, I glory in your spunk ; if you keep on in this way a few years, you will be in my place." Johnny Clem, the ten-year-old drummer boy from Newark, Ohio, beats the long roll, throws away his drum, finds a gun, kills a rebel colonel who summons him to surrender, and is by General Rosecrantz made a sergeant on the field of battle. Boy Britain nobly seconds his commander when the federal flotilla sweeps into the battle storm of grim Fort Henry. Clustering curls conceal his youthful brow, his face is beardless ; but always comes his cheerful "Aye, aye, sir !" as he heeds his captain's orders ; and when, amid falling heroes, he, too, yields up his spirit, his shot-marred form is the most precious offering made

upon the bloody deck of the Essex. Willie Grout¹ was but 18 when he entered his country's service. "Many," said he, "that are perfectly able to go are very brave and forward till it comes their turn; then it is another story. They need something to stir them up." "Tell Company D that I should have escaped but I am shot," were his last words as he sank beneath the discolored waters of the Potomac on that dread day of Ball's Bluff. Who can tell how many were stirred to manly deeds by the death of this young hero? It was sad when, by the fortunes of war, our boy became a prisoner. Like a bird he chafed in his confinement; but still he endured its rigors much better than those who had fully reached man's estate. From the field of capture to the nearest railroad station there were often many miles of forced marching, but with blistered feet he bravely holds on his way. Tears may force their way down his cheek; but no word of complaint passes his compressed lips. The prison is reached. Is it the tobacco warehouse of Richmond, Lynchburg or Danville, or is it the stockade of Saulsbury or Andersonville? In either event he is to enter upon a life whose horrors no pen is adequate to describe. If in the storehouse he is debarred from the sight even of the heavens through jealous watchers who are ready to shoot him who nears a window. Through weary days he wanders aimlessly from point to point in his prison-house. Always hungry, till tired nature, at last ceasing to crave, he yields to death and is buried, it may be in a nameless grave. * Or, perchance, attacked by fever, he lies on the floor of his prison, racked by pain, attended only by those who can do but little for him. All the long night hours we hear him piteously calling for mother and sister. As his mind wanders there passes before him the scenes of his earlier days. He is again in the green fields, beside the running waters, and we listen as he talks to

¹ Co. D, 15th Mass. Infantry.

those who, in fancy, accompany him. Soon, however, comes the end, and we bid "good-bye" to his lifeless body, never to be wept over by those who loved him. If in the stockade, alternately frozen and burned, consumed by hunger and thirst, in danger from him who guarded the dead line, and in equal danger from hard-hearted fellow-prisoners, his life was a burden. But through all this, the youth passed with less injury than the man whose habits had been completely formed and whose mind was beset with anxiety over dependent ones at home. Thirty thousand men now survive of the one hundred and six thousand who suffered imprisonment; forty thousand succumbed while in the hands of the rebels; six thousand died within a very few weeks of their release, and between the time of their discharge and the present thirty thousand more have answered to the roll-call on the other side. It is a safe estimate that five-sixths of those who are alive to-day had not seen their 21st birthday when the prison doors or gates closed upon them. To those who lived the day came at last when the prison bars were burst, and weak, faint and dying the famished ones were sent towards their homes. Many, too weak for the effort, were left on prison floors or beside the loathsome pits in which they had lived for months, and from which they barely had strength to crawl when the joyous announcement of exchange was heard. Upon one transport that carried men from Richmond to Aiken's Landing were three dead Union soldiers, whom comrades had helped aboard, but who could not live till the Union lines were reached. Were the sea not trackless, we could mark the paths of steamers that bore prisoners from Wilmington, Charleston and Savannah, by the whitening bones of those who found ocean graves on their homeward journey.

But in all this wild whirl of war, it was not altogether give on the part of our youthful soldier. He was the

recipient of many a valuable lesson, learned willingly or otherwise. First, he came to know the value of

PHYSICAL DISCIPLINE.

Army life afforded him a drill that no other school could possibly have given. Attention to details is a most desirable trait, but one that more people lack than possess; but here he speedily learned that there were, practically, no little things. Everything was of importance. His arms and equipments must be kept bright and burnished and his own person neat and tidy. Attention to signals gave him an alert and watchful air. Drill gave to his form an erect and manful bearing. Without the annoying minutiae of the British army, our soldier learned that conformity to requirements made him a more reliable man. The enforced out-of-doors life speedily banished all the complaints incident to the largely artificial ways of modern living. An abundant though coarse fare became more palatable than many a costly viand eaten since, for food had then these items most essential to enjoyment, healthy hunger and an excellent stomach. This life and regimen gave to the city boy, lately pale and thin, a soundness and strength astonishing to himself.

To these men, drawn from every rank and station, military life promised the utmost satisfaction to personal ambition. It is a laudable thing to desire to lead men. Napoleon's soldiers knew that, in every knapsack, there was the possibility of a marshal's baton, and so our soldiers knew that duty faithfully performed, that bravery in the face of danger, must bring their reward. These men were no machine soldiers collected by a tyrannical Frederick William, for their stature or breadth of shoulders, nor yet the hinds who constitute so large a part of the rank and file of the British army. Never yet, not even in our Revolution, had men been gathered together where so large a share were prepared to step into any and all vacant places.

The war was not waged to a successful conclusion by martinets simply. The men who moved forward blindly, through morass and over walls, simply because they heard a command and no countermand, were not the best soldiers. The machine men, who came to these shores in the days of the French and Indian wars and declared that the natives did not conform to the usages of war in taking aim, were as regular as clockwork in their movements. They brought their firelocks to their hips and fired, when told to do so, and then, in unison, they loaded and fired again, and rare sport such fighting was to the men who were accustomed to make every shot tell. These men could do what they were told to do, and nothing more. Our average soldier was capable of stepping from the ranks to a command, and frequently did so. When detailed for particular service, as he often was, he was given discretionary powers, and seldom, indeed, was it that regret over such delegated authority arose. He was not an illiterate, unthinking Hodge, but a man who could see a newsboy a long distance off, and one to whom the postman's coming was of the utmost importance. He was a man who would not make war a profession, but who simply found himself temporarily carrying a gun and performing military duties, looking forward to a successful ending, and the return of himself to secular pursuits, yet knowing his danger and not unwillingly offering himself, if need be, on the altar of the nation's defense. In all cases, our soldier was taught to value his self-respect. Liable at any time to be called to command his associates, he naturally strove to merit their good opinions. There was no purchasing of commissions, that strangest of all things in the organization of the British army,—and that men should steadily win victories in the face of such a monstrosity, is the most flattering comment that can possibly be made on the fighting qualities of the Anglo-Saxon, for only when faced by men of the same race, as in the Revolution and 1812, has the

English army been overcome. Says a writer:¹ "The rank and file are drawn from the dregs of the population, and the officers are selected from the upper classes, undergo no preliminary training, and purchase their commissions." Till recently, there was for the common soldier the whipping post for his offenses, and for his bravery a paltry bauble in the way of a cross, or at best a chevron. He might not aspire to a command. Private John Penn of the 17th Lancers struck down two Russian adversaries single-handed in that wonderful charge of the Light Brigade. Upon his breast, shone already eleven decorations, telling of former prowess; but to what good? The best swordsman in his regiment, there was no place to which he might aspire. The Germans would have taken such a man from the ranks and sent him to a military school, where he might be fitted for the position that his bravery merited.² The only Englishman who perfectly knew his men was Oliver Cromwell, and his was the best organized force that ever fought on English shores. He rewarded bravery with promotion, and his Ironsides will long live the proudest of Britain's soldiery. With us, too, was the same idea current, and many a boy who marched away with a gun in his hand returned with the shoulder-straps of a major or a colonel. To our well-disciplined soldier, then, there was ever present the thought that for his bravery, his faithfulness, there might come what had come to many another valiant comrade, a commission.

OBEDIENCE.

No man can fitly and properly command others till he has himself thoroughly learned the part of obeying. The

¹ E. L. Godkin, N. Y. Nation, Vol. 4, p. 415.

² Had he been a soldier of any other army in the world than that of England, humbly born though he is, he would have been promoted to rank and have other honors conferred upon him than the medals and clasps that cover his breast.—Nolan's "War against Russia," Vol. 1, p. 552.

best master is he who has been himself a servant. Our government illustrates this in sending to West Point and Annapolis young men who there, in addition to mere technical education, learn what absolute compliance with orders means. The civilian commander who did not rise from the ranks, or from a low commission, lost one of the most salutary parts of the lessons in his service, and herein lies, perhaps, the secret of the ignoble failures of many who, on account of political prominence, stepped at once into the highest places in the army. They had not learned to obey. There was not in them that humility which accompanies all real greatness. In the true soldier's mind no thought should be harbored but that of implicit, complete obedience, and by "soldier" is meant not only him whom we dub a private, but him also upon whose shoulders appear the insignia of rank. No paltry consideration of loyalty to a particular commander should outweigh the far higher claim of country. Immediate attention to orders should be the aim of every soldier, and, though certain defeat may stare him in the face, that is no concern of his. In the heroism of many a lost field has been sowed the seed of subsequent victories. Wood, at Chickamauga, putting in his pocket the order of Rosecrans, and trying to do as he was bid, is laudable. Sherman, committing to writing his objections to the assault at Vicksburg, and yet leading none the less gallantly the subsequent day, is deserving of all praise. Then that grandest instance, "When shall its glory fade?" The inspiration given through that mistaken order at Balaklava has carried many a column over obstacles high and strong to certain victory. Far from being lost the ringing shout of the advance has long outlasted the confusion of retreat. In all history there is not a grander figure than that of Nolan, as he placed himself with those who rode through mistake to certain death. What though Cardigan knew "some one had blundered;" "his not to reason why, his not to make reply," but as he interpreted

the order so he acted. That noble brigade did not finish the charge when on and through the "Russian line they broke." True, the poet says, "and then they rode back;" but rather let us say that they rode on and on and that their memory has become to all armies a quenchless oriflamme. Nolan fell in the early moments of the charge, but Cardigan rode forward and back, with that brave line of men behind and beside him. No court of inquiry has ever charged him with dishonor, much less proved it. He with his Six Hundred will live along the ages with those who are not born to die. Mark the words of the soldier: "I received the order to attack, and although I should not have thought of making such an attack without orders, and although I differed in opinion as to the propriety of the order, I promptly obeyed. I placed myself at the head of my regiment and gave the word of command."¹

The annals of time do not present a more abject sight than that of the dilatory commander endeavoring to excuse his own remissness by charging his superior officer with ignorance of the situation, and hoping to prove his charge by the testimony of men who were in the enemy's lines. Had there been no Mad Anthony Waynes willing to "storm Hell" even, if the attack were planned by a Washington, neither our own nor any other war could have been waged to a successful ending.

One million seven hundred and eighty thousand one hundred and seventy-three different men served, first and last, on the Union side during the rebellion. They represented two millions seven hundred and seventy-two thousand four hundred and eight enlistments. Of these men it is estimated that one million are living to-day. What kind of citizens are they? Did the war make them any less reliable as farmers, mechanics, merchants or professional men? Speaking as an ex-soldier to Grand Army men I may safely answer, No. Turn where we may we find the

¹ Nolan's "War against Russia."

veteran filling places of honor and trust, nor has the government that he defended forgotten him. Men may say that republics are ungrateful, but we, as survivors of the greatest struggle of modern times, should disprove the statement. If it is meant that our nation has not singled out a Churchill, Nelson, or Wellesley, to make of them Marlboroughs, Trafalgars and Wellingtons: if she has not changed a plain Garnet Wolseley into a viscount or a duke, adding to these names vast sums of money, then might the charge hold good. Our nation has done much better. She has averaged her honors and gifts as no other country or people ever did. Grant, Hayes and Garfield are the generals successively elected to the chief position in the nation's gift since the war. Scarcely a State that was loyal during the rebellion has failed to make at least one ex-soldier her governor. From Maine with her Connor and Davis, New Hampshire with brave Walter Harriman, Massachusetts with General Butler, Rhode Island with Burnside, Connecticut with the gallant Hawley, New York with John A. Dix, Pennsylvania with Geary and Hartmanft, Ohio with Noyes and Hayes, to Illinois, with Ogilshy and Palmer, and thence across the continent, we shall not find many States that have not remembered those who went forth from them as soldiers. The voices of Burnside, Logan, Mitchell and Hawley in the United States senate, with those of Farnsworth, Rosecrans, Lyman, Lovering and McCook in the house, tell us that the people are alive to the sacrifices made for them in the dark days of national peril. Service in the army has been almost the only "open sesame" to places of trust and emolument under the general government. The soldier, however, who came home determined to live on the suffrages of his fellow-citizens made the great mistake of his life. Public office, of whatever kind, is at the best a poor, uncertain source of living, and he who from having had his needs supplied from government sources formerly, is eternally seeking

some excuse to get more from the same supply, is unworthy the badge he wears.

Horace Greeley once said that many men were reared with the one purpose of boring gimlet holes into the public treasury, and then as rapidly as possible of enlarging them into auger holes. The laborer is worthy of his hire, and with our eyes open we accepted the service and the compensation. Long since the accounts were nominally closed, but there are some, too many by far, who can not to-day perform any task, however trivial, without demanding extra compensation on account of army life years ago. Such men utterly failed to learn the prime lesson that should have come from that service, viz., manly, constant, self-dependence. What shall we say of the man who is to-day, twenty or more years after the alleged event, endeavoring to secure affidavits that he was sun-struck? Or of another outwardly and always well and hearty, suddenly falling into a decline on the passage of the Arrears of Pensions act? No man should stultify himself, either in receiving or in aiding another to get a pension for other than the most apparent reason; one that he is willing all his neighbors should know; one that he would not be ashamed to see bulletined in the post-office or published in his newspaper. He who would have that which he esteems the ornament of life, and yet is unwilling to have it known why he received it, must "live a coward in his own esteem." The soldiers themselves never asked for the arrears of pensions bill. A gang of agents, lobbyists, harpies, persuaded congress that there was a tremendous pressure demanding this, and finally our highest legislative body, nominally to satisfy the soldiers, really to enrich the agents, passed this act, taking at one grasp \$27,000,000 from the treasury, more by far than all the gifts made by England, a grateful monarchy, to Marlborough, Wellington and Wolseley, however enormous the amount. The two countries have uniformly pursued very different courses in

their treatment of soldiers. England selects some one conspicuous officer and on him lavishes her favors without stint or reason. Her Nelsons and Wellesleys are noteworthy figures; but how about the private, the lower officers, the man who really did the fighting? Let him serve his active life and she will retire him to a home for worn out soldiers and sailors, for which privilege, however, he has been paying all the time of his service, by enforced stoppage of a portion of his pay, the whole of which is the merest pittance.¹ The United States is the first country to acknowledge the paramount importance of the enlisted man, and in her annual pension disbursement of over \$50,000,000, tells the world what she thinks of those who fought for her. Yet we are told that republics are ungrateful. From a pension of \$72 a month for those who are entirely helpless, she scales the sum down to four dollars, and pays this, too, from the day of the man's discharge. She has established homes for the helpless veterans, and at Togus, Dayton, Hampton and Milwaukee, two thousand six hundred and forty-eight worn out men are maintained at government expense. Nor are they forced to lose their individuality, to become mere parts in one great machine, but they have a home, luxurious almost, subjected to the very lightest restraint possible. Whatever may be said of republics in the past or of those in other parts of the world, the reproach has no application to ours. It seems to be the fixed purpose that no maimed or feeble veteran should want. For this determination we have the utmost admiration.

Says General Grant: "No pension can compensate the men who have lost one or more limbs, and I should have been glad to see that class of pensioners well provided for, instead of the indiscriminate pensioners, some of whom are, physically, as good as they would have been if the war had

¹ Vide "Chelsea," Chambers' Encyclopædia.

never been fought." It is this class of men who have brought odium upon their deserving brothers. There are soldiers whose bodies show honorable scars, who are maimed in hand or foot, who, to-day, walking with halting footstep through the results of sickness in the army, will not move in the matter of pensions, lest they be classed in the list of grabbers. There are other men who go so far as to desire indiscriminate pensioning of certain classes, say of those who were for six months or more prisoners of war. Why confine it there? Why not make it two months, two days? But why prisoners only? Why not as well pension every one, nominally a soldier, whether he saw the enemy or not, or whether he ever carried a gun? A pitiable sight, truly, is that of the man who, having had public aid, lies down helplessly and whines over his woes, real and imaginary, has in succession all the ills that flesh is heir to, and can not or will not find an opportunity to help himself. Characteristics have changed much if such a man was any great advantage to his regiment. Let every ex-soldier present count up the men who "skirmished to the rear" when the fight began, and he will get a near estimate of those who to-day pick the public goose in the way of pensions for other cause than wounds or generally acknowledged disability. Out upon such infamous acts! What! fight to free an enslaved race, follow the flag and wear the blue for two, three, four years, and then come home to become public burdens! to become a prey to imaginary ills! to become beggars in deed if not in name, in seeking to get a living in any other way than earning it! to stand mendicant-like with outstretched hand and importunate, insatiate, unceasingly to cry "give." Death on the field of battle had been far preferable. Let the \$550,000,000 already expended in pensions be a sufficient answer to those who would carp at our government, and a monument through all time to the munificence of our republic. The people have made presidents, governors, senators and rep-

representatives of their sons and brothers, and to the maimed and feeble the government has given more than was ever given by any country before to those who survived her wars.

Our soldier boys left their homes, performed the duties of camp life, endured the fatigue of long marches, fought the battles bravely, and when the fight was done, grown to be men, came marching home with glad and gallant tread. "Not all of them," some lone and sad hearted mother will say; "My darling brother came not back to me," some stricken one will murmur here to-night.

Those sixty-one thousand and more who fell in battle, the more than thirty-four thousand who died from wounds, the one hundred and eighty-three thousand who perished of disease, must have been some one's sons and brothers. Each heart has its own precious memory as it calls up, to-night, the loved face, and lives over again those glad years of boyhood. Then they follow the loved form down to the scene of strife; they hear the din of battle; they see the rushing charge. In quick succession passes the wild panorama; but how quickly all the scene narrows to one prostrate, motionless form! "My boy!" "My brother!" In a shallow grave his body lies; dead in all his grace and comeliness. Or from the dreary prison cell he was carried to his hallowed bed. How many bereaved hearts can repeat with Mrs. Browning:

At first happy news came in gay letters, moiled
 With my kisses, of camp life and glory, and how
 They both loved me, and soon coming home to be spoiled,
 In return would fan off every fly from my brow
 With their green laurel bough.

What's art for a woman? To hold on her knees
 Both darlings! To feel all their arms round her throat
 Cling, strangle a little to sew by degrees,
 And 'broider the long clothes and neat little coat;
 To dream and to dote.

To teach them—it stings there. I made them indeed
 Speak plain the word "country." I taught them no doubt

That a country's a thing men should die for at need.
 I prated of liberty, rights, and about
 The tyrant cast out.

And when their eyes flashed! Oh my beautiful eyes!
 I exulted! nay, let them go forth at the wheels
 Or the guns and denied not, but then the surprise
 When one sits quite alone! then one weeps, then one kneels!
 God! how the house feels.

* * * * *

Dead! One of them shot by the sea in the east,
 And one of them shot in the west by the sea.
 Dead, both my boys.

* * * * *

O Christ of the seven wounds, who look'dst through the dark
 To the face of thy mother! consider, I pray,
 How we common mothers stand desolate; mark
 Whose sons, not being Christ's, die with eyes turned away
 And no last word to say.

But no one of these sad hearts denied for a moment, to those whose sons returned, the supreme joy and gladness that ruled the hour. With what a jaunty air those soldiers march on their return! They come with victory inscribed upon their banners. Tattered and torn, rent and gashed in battles fought, their banners bear the names of places made famous by heroic deeds. Faces are bronzed and bearded that four years since were so young and fair. The populace throngs the streets. Fathers and mothers who breathe a prayer of thanksgiving that the long anxiety is over, look with pride on their brave one marching by, or sigh for him in his southern grave. Boys and girls jostle each other as they strive to get a nearer view of the elder brother, who is now coming home to them. Thus the last march is had, the final parade is made, ranks are broken, and the citizen soldier again becomes a part of the great body politic, whence he a few years before emerged. Assimilated in that grand aggregate he enters with new zeal upon the life before him. The whole nation seemingly leaps forward at this wonderful accession of strength and energy, and at once enters upon a career of enterprise and prosperity eclipsing all that the world had seen before. Proud as was

his record in the field, grander still have been his achievements in the domain of peace. He has proved to mankind that a soldier to-day, he can be the most progressive citizen to-morrow. No standing army, consuming the substance of the laborer, is necessary here. No subjecting the whole male populace to military drill and an enforced service will be tolerated, when a breath only will fan the fires of patriotism, where millions of freemen stand ready to fight for their rights.

Thus may it ever be ; but comrades, the time approaches when such scenes as this of to-night must be left for others to behold. Other times and other hands have, for a season, strewn flowers over the patriots' graves, and spoken words of praise for fallen comrades ; but after years of interim the veterans have passed away, the battles they fought have become a part of musty history. Few can tell for whose memory Collins wrote :

"How sleep the brave who sink to rest,
By all their country's wishes blest."

The words of Thucydides concerning those who fell in the First Winter, have for ages been a model for him who would describe patriotic devotion, but the facts, centuries since, faded into oblivion, along with the people who first heard them recited. Those inimitable words of Lincoln at Gettysburg must, in time, lose much of their significance. Monuments and memory must alike perish. When this time comes it will matter little to the man who did his duty when country called him. New times, new men, must develop new deeds, and new memories must follow them. One day passing, another succeeds. To us, however, this memorial exercise is just as important as though it were the only one in all the long years of history. While we live it must not lapse into forgetfulness.

Long since the Grand Army of Napoleon joined its mighty leader on the other side. Marshals of the empire, generals,

soldiers—all slept the last sleep; but legend says that

- “ At midnight from his grave
The drummer woke and rose;
And beating loud his drum,
Forth on his round he goes.
- “ Stirred by his fleshless arms
His drum-sticks patly fall.
He beats the loud ‘retreat’
‘*Reveille*’ and ‘roll-call.’
- “ So strangely rolls that drum,
So deep it echoes round—
Old soldiers in their graves
To life start at the sound.
- “ And at midnight, from his tomb,
The chief awoke and rose;
And, followed by his staff,
With slow steps on he goes.
- “ The ranks present their arms;
Deep roll the drums the while;
Recovering then, the troops
Before the chief defile.
- “ Captains and generals round,
In circled form appear;
The chief, to the first a word—
Then whispers in his ear.
- “ The word goes round the ranks,
Resounds along the Seine—
The word they give is—‘*France*,’
The Answer—‘*St. Hélène*.’
- “ ’Tis thus at midnight’s hour
The grand review, they say,
Is by dead Cæsar held
In the Champ d’Elysées.”

A grander army than ever Cæsar or Napoleon led is passing! Why not summon from their final sleep that part which years ago fell out of line, and again, to-night, present unbroken ranks? Let our great Commander-in-Chief¹ start from the sleep on which he fell nearly a score

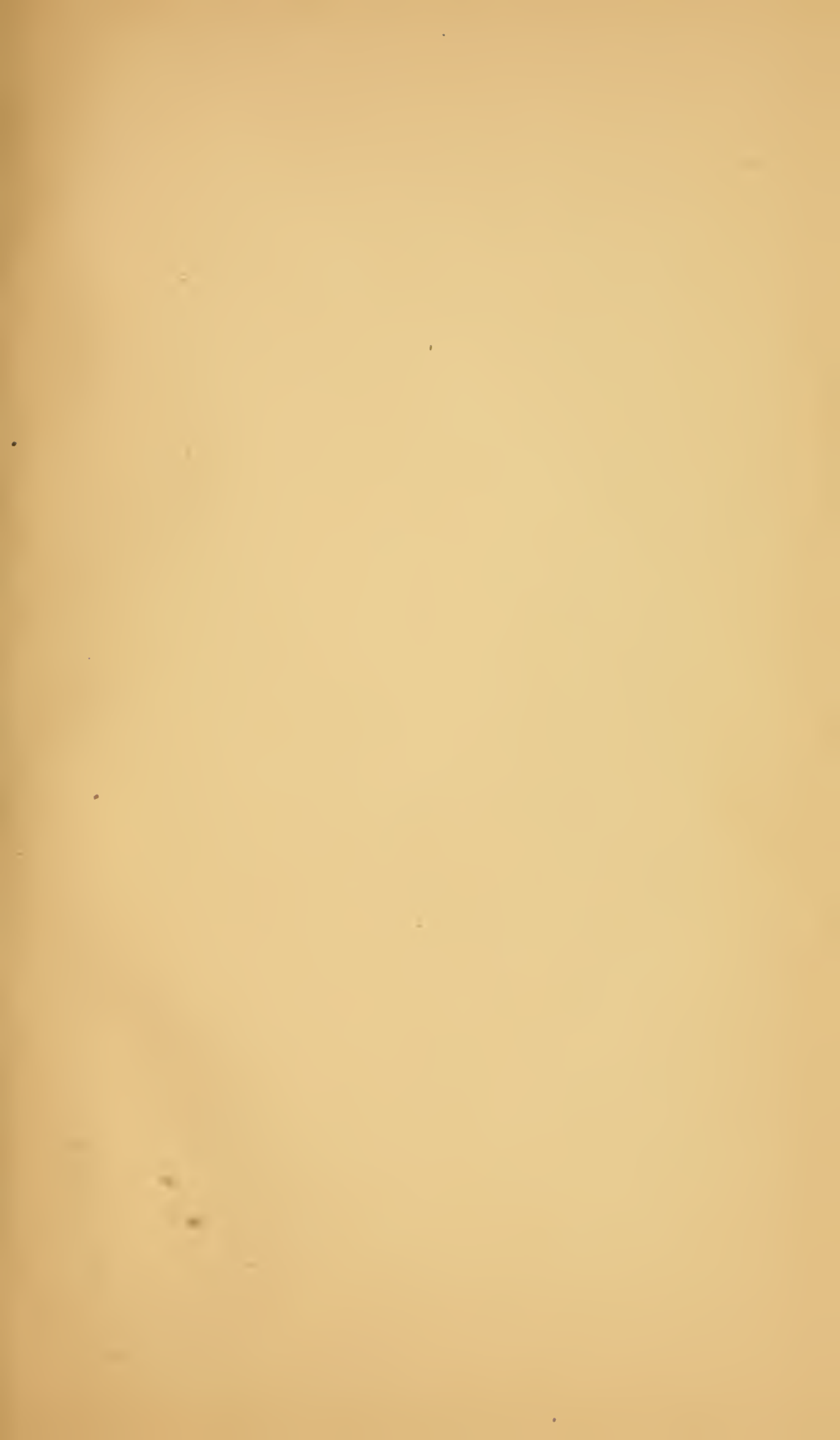
¹ Suspended in Mechanics Hall are life-size portraits of Lincoln, Garfield, and George H. Ward, Colonel of the 15th Mass. He was killed at Gettysburg. In front of Lincoln’s picture were seated 503 pupils of the High School.

of years ago, and with kindly eye look over this array of youth, the hope of the future, upon us who will once more "fall in." Garfield, on phantom steed, once more rides that terrible race with death to the side of Thomas, making that Rock of Chickamauga henceforth a foundation stone in history. Stand down! ye living ones. The head of the line belongs to those who died on the battlefield, and from Ball's Bluff, Antietam, Roanoke, Cedar Creek, Gettysburg they trooping come. Dress well your lines, for no tyro in drill looks down upon you.

Colonel Ward, the regiment awaits your command! Mark the kindling eye of the soldier as he draws his long sheathed sword, and, as of yore, the men respond to his word.

Once a year, then, comrades, let us keep this parade. Keep the memories green, and, as year after year, more flowers are needed, more graves are covered, we will remember that the time is nearing when, on the other shore, all battles fought, life's warfare over, young and old, we, together, shall to the call of the Supreme Commander answer: "Here!"







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